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ABSTRACT

Bridges to Business is a dual admissions program between Holyoke Community College (HCC) (Massachusetts) and the School of Management at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst (UMass). Established to attract, educate, and graduate linguistic minority students, the FIPSE-funded program addressed the major problems faced by limited English proficiency students, such as below-average rates of retention and graduation, low aspirations, lack of financial support, and difficulty meeting university admission requirements. Bridges to Business offered academic and personal support services, such as bilingual teaching assistants and workshops, to linguistic minority students enrolled in the Business Studies program at HCC. Students were required to maintain a 2.5 GPA or above and earn at least a C in six predictor courses in order to earn an associate degree and transfer to UMass. When compared with all minority students enrolled at HCC, Bridges to Business students maintained a higher grade point average and rate of retention. Though the inhibiting factors of poverty and a lack of self-confidence proved to be barriers equal to the lack of language proficiency, 7 students out of the program's 43 earned associate degrees and 3 transferred to the School of Management at UMass. Appendices include considerations in reviewing future proposals and acquiring assistance from FIPSE. (YKH)

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ED 413 956

Bridges to Business

Final Report: Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education

Elaine Ironfield

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Project Director:	Elaine Ironfield Dean of Institutional Development Holyoke Community College 303 Homestead Avenue Holyoke, MA 01040 (413) 538-7000
Program Officer:	Sherrin Marshall
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HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PROJECT SUMMARY

Bridges to Business

The Bridges to Business program, a collaborative between Holyoke Community College and the School of Management at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, is designed to increase the number of linguistic minority students who complete a baccalaureate degree program in Business. The program components include a joint recruitment effort, a dual admissions agreement, academic and personal support services, dual advisors to ease the transition, and private support for scholarships.

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Attachments: Video Tape and Program Brochures

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY — BRIDGES TO BUSINESS

Overview: The Bridges to Business program is a dual admissions program with the School of Management at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. The program serves linguistic minority students enrolled in the Business Studies program at Holyoke Community College.

Purpose: The goal of the program is to prepare and encourage these students to transfer to a baccalaureate degree program. The program offers linguistic minority students special course sections of introductory courses in business, bilingual teaching assistants and tutors, as well as integrated counseling in order to help them succeed at the community college. Students accepted for the Bridges to Business program receive a conditional letter of acceptance from the School of Management (SOM) which requires them to earn the associate degree in Business Studies, maintain a 2.5 grade point average, and earn a grade of C in six predictor courses.

Background and Origins: The program was developed jointly by the School of Management and Holyoke Community College during the spring and summer of 1988. Administrators and faculty at the School of Management, which has a selective admissions policy, were concerned over their inability to attract qualified minority students. Holyoke Community College was committed to expanding opportunities for linguistic minorities, a growing population in the college's service area. Both institutions saw this program as one which build upon the unique strengths of the university and the community college in order to attract and prepare linguistic minority students for meaningful careers.

The project was designed to address what college administrators and faculty saw as the major problems faced by limited English proficiency students:

- Below average rates of retention, student achievement and graduation for linguistic minority students enrolled at Holyoke community college
- Transfer policies at the university which discriminated against students who required more than four semesters to complete an associate degree
- Low aspiration levels on the part of linguistic minority students who had few role models
- Lack of financial support for linguistic minority students who may have exhausted Pell eligibility and or have very high levels of need

- Overcoming the fear of a large sprawling university located in a picturesque college town far removed from the inner city neighborhoods where most low income minority students reside

Project Description: The planning team determined that a viable effort to recruit and serve linguistic minority students would have to address four issues: recruitment and admissions, successful completion of the associate degree in Business Studies, transition to UMass and successful completion of the baccalaureate degree, and an environment at both institutions which is sensitive to and respectful of cultural differences. The group designed an integrated program of academic and personal support services to address the first three issues and planned a faculty development component to address the fourth issue. An application for FIPSE support was successful and the Bridges to Business program began in September 1989.

The plan of operation identified five components:

1) A dual admissions/recruitment program to raise aspiration levels and eliminate barriers to transfer

2) A comprehensive academic program with integrated support services for linguistic minorities which will enable them to meet the conditions of the dual admissions program

3) Transfer to the University of Massachusetts-Amherst School of Management and successful completion of the baccalaureate degree

4) An environment which enhances opportunities for linguistic minority students

5) Dissemination

Three of those components were implemented during the grant period. One which addressed transfer and successful completion of the baccalaureate degree is still in process. Some aspects of the final component, dissemination, has been delayed since the amount of time students would require to complete the program was underestimated.

Project Results: Holyoke Community College and the School of Management developed a true dual admissions program. Students who were accepted into the Bridge to Business program also received a conditional letter of acceptance to the School of Management at UMass-Amherst. Students were required to earn an associate degree in Business Studies, maintain a GPA of 2.5 and achieve a C average in six predictor courses. During the grant period 43 students were enrolled in the program.

Entering students were enrolled in special course sections of developmental English, Business Math and Introduction to Business. Bilingual teaching assistants were assigned to each course to conduct weekly review sessions. The Outreach Specialist/Counselor conducted weekly seminars and a graduate student in Business at UMass came to Holyoke Community College one day a week to provide tutoring. In order to help these students overcome poor math skills, the program provided special summer courses in math and accounting. Students maintained contact with the university through campus visits and seminars/workshops conducted by the Director of the Minority Management Education Program. To date, seven students have earned associate degrees and three have transferred to the School of Management. When compared to all minority students enrolled in the college, those in Bridges to Business have a higher grade point average and a higher rate of retention.

While in retrospect the problems were accurately identified, we failed to identify other problems. The low aspiration levels of students posed problems in recruitment and the inhibiting factors of poverty as well as a lack of self-confidence proved to be barriers equal to the lack of language proficiency. Poor math skills and other problems extended the time needed to earn an associates degree. Since most students enrolled in the program required six semesters to earn an associate degree, the first graduates enrolled at the university in the fall of 1992. The School of Management secured private support to provide scholarship assistance for two of these students.

Summary and Conclusions: Each component of the project provided opportunities for learning. Students learned that they could succeed in college, faculty and administrators involved with the program gained a better understanding of how to meet the needs of linguistic minority students, and Holyoke Community College became more sensitive to cultural differences. Each component produced mixed results. Some strategies succeeded, others failed. However, we learned from our failures and developed new approaches that were more successful.

Holyoke Community College and the School of Management have continued the Bridge to Business program by reallocating institutional resources and earmarking vocational education funds for teaching assistants and tutors. In the spring of 1992, UMass-Amherst and five community colleges (including Holyoke) entered into a dual admissions agreement which includes all schools within the university. This agreement parallels the agreement which we developed in the fall of 1989.

HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Bridges To Business

A. PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Bridges to Business program is a dual admissions program with the School of Management at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst. The program serves linguistic minority students enrolled in the Business Studies Program at Holyoke Community College. The goal of the program is to prepare and encourage these students to transfer to a baccalaureate degree program.

The program was developed jointly by the School of Management and Holyoke Community College during the spring and summer of 1988. Administrators and faculty at the School of Management, which has a selective admissions policy, were concerned over their inability to attract qualified minority students. Holyoke Community College was committed to expanding opportunities for linguistic minorities, a growing population in the college's service area. Both institutions saw this program as one which could build upon the unique strengths of the university and the community college in order to attract and prepare linguistic minority students for meaningful careers. Since other selective baccalaureate programs in business which were accredited by the American Association of Collegiate Schools of Business were equally unsuccessful in their efforts to increase minority enrollment, this program had the potential to serve as a national model.

The Bridges to Business program offers linguistic minority students special course sections of introductory courses in business, bilingual teaching assistants and tutors, as well as integrated counseling in order to help them succeed at the community college. Students accepted for the Bridges to Business program receive a conditional letter of acceptance from the School of Management (SOM) which requires them to earn the associate degree in Business Studies, maintain a 2.5 grade point average and earn a grade of C in six predictor courses. While enrolled at the community college, students are assigned a SOM advisor and attend SOM activities in order to ease the transition to a large university. In order to facilitate transfer, the SOM has attracted private support for scholarships for Bridges to Business students.

To date, 43 students have participated in the Bridges to Business program. Three are currently enrolled in the SOM. While at Holyoke Community College, Bridges to Business students have earned grade point averages above the all-college average and the rate of retention also exceeds the all-college rate. In 1992, the University of Massachusetts entered into a dual admissions program with five community colleges, including Holyoke, which guaranteed admission to any graduate of a transfer-oriented program who maintained a 2.5 cumulative grade point average.

At the conclusion of the FIPSE grant, Holyoke Community College and the SOM have continued the Bridges to Business program. Institutional resources and a vocational education grant have enabled the college to continue the outreach program, provide special courses sections, and academic support services. The SOM continues to provide a liaison who meets periodically with students enrolled in the program and to host field trips and other activities for these students.

B. PURPOSE

The overall goal of the project was to increase the number of linguistic minority students who transferred and successfully completed a baccalaureate degree program in a selective School of Management. Although American business and industry was aggressively seeking management personnel who are bilingual and bicultural, only 4.5 percent of all Hispanic students enrolled in baccalaureate degree programs in 1988 were majoring in Business. Largely because of the poor economic circumstances experienced by individuals with limited English skills, Hispanics and other linguistic minorities have had considerable difficulty in meeting the entrance requirements at leading collegiate schools of business and management. Many student, unable to meet selective admissions requirements, enroll at community colleges in hopes of overcoming differences and transferring to baccalaureate institutions. Unfortunately, linguistic minorities do not earn a proportionate share of the degrees awarded by community colleges.

The Bridges to Business program was developed to attract, retain and graduate linguistic minority students. The project was designed to address what college administrators and faculty saw as the major problems faced by limited English proficiency students:

1. Below average rates of retention, student achievement and graduation for linguistic minority students enrolled at Holyoke Community College

2. Transfer policies at the university which discriminated against students who required more than four semesters to complete an associate degree

3. Low aspiration levels on the part of linguistic minority students who had few role models

4. Lack of financial support for linguistic minority students who may have exhausted Pell eligibility and or have very high levels of need

5. Overcoming the fear of a large sprawling university located in picturesque college town far removed from the inner city neighborhoods where most low income minority students reside

While in retrospect the problems were accurately identified, we perhaps failed to understand the severity of those problems and the degree to which both the community college and the university would have to change if linguistic minority students were to succeed. Changing policies proved to be as difficult as changing attitudes and institutional climate. One unanticipated problem was the difference in the cultures between the two institutions. Holyoke Community College is a relatively small institution when compared to the university. Senior administrators at Holyoke Community College can commit the institution to a particular initiative and bring about the changes in policy needed to support that initiative. The university is larger and much more complex. It moves slowly, and even senior administrators within a particular school may have little influence on university policy.

The low aspiration levels of students posed problems in recruitment and the inhibiting factors of poverty, as well as a lack of self-confidence, proved to be barriers equal to the lack of language proficiency. These students led precarious lives and even the most dedicated and successful students were deterred by family problems, intolerable living conditions, lack of sufficient financial aid and adverse economic conditions in the Commonwealth.

We assumed that the program would attract and serve traditional age students who were college-oriented but not prepared to meet the requirements for admission to the School of Management. While some of the students who enrolled in the Bridges to Business program were recent high school graduates, the majority were older students who had interrupted their education or had completed high school in Puerto Rico. Many entered the college through the ESL program. Recruitment was more difficult than we anticipated since many of these students could not envision the idea of continuing their education beyond the associate degree level and, in fact, doubted their ability to succeed at that level.

Although we were aware of the need for these students to complete a two semester college-level math course in the associates degree program, we did not realize that math would be a major stumbling block. The students who enrolled in the program had required one or two semesters of developmental-level math before enrolling in the required college-level courses. Consequently, the length of time needed to acquire math skills delayed their progress towards the degree. This problem was compounded by a high level of math anxiety which was a symptom of their low self-esteem.

Certainly we underestimated the amount of time it would take for these minority students to earn an associate degree. We assumed that since in the first year, the program would serve currently enrolled students as well as new entrants that by year 2, students would be enrolled at the university. No students were ready for transfer at the end of year 1. Two students transferred at the end of year 2, but one experienced personal problems that caused her to drop out, and the other choose not to major in business. Three June 1992 graduates transferred to the School of Management in September 1992. All are still enrolled and doing well. However, since relatively few students actually moved on to the university in the three years of the project, the program has had little impact on the School of Management .

C. BACKGROUND AND ORIGINS

In the spring of 1988, the newly appointed Dean of the School of Management at UMass-Amherst approached Holyoke Community College in order to explore ways in which minority students enrolled at the community college could be encouraged

to transfer to the School of Management. Holyoke Community College is located approximately 20 miles from the Amherst campus and has a strong reputation for its transfer programs. For many years, HCC graduates had transferred to the university in a variety of programs. The university considered HCC graduates to be well prepared, and studies had shown that they achieved at a higher level than students who had enrolled at the university as freshmen.

Two cities in the college's service area, Holyoke and Springfield, had growing linguistic minority populations. In 1988, approximately 44% of the school population in Holyoke and 30% of those enrolled in the Springfield public school were Hispanic. Since many of those students were enrolled in bilingual classes in high school, they had not yet acquired a level of proficiency that would enable them to succeed in the mainstream. In 1984, Holyoke Community College initiated an ESL program to serve these students. In the fall of 1988, 130 students were enrolled in ESL courses. Hispanic students were approximately 4.5 percent of the college's total enrollment (3,362).

In March of 1988, administrators and faculty from both institutions met for the first time to identify realistic strategies that would increase the enrollment of linguistic minorities and ensure their successful completion of a baccalaureate degree at the University of Massachusetts School of Management. The meetings continued throughout the academic year and resumed in September. The planning team included the Dean and Assistant Dean and the Admissions Coordinator of the School of Management as well as the Minority Student Coordinator. Holyoke Community College was represented by the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Dean of Institutional Development, the Coordinator of the ESL Support Program, the chair of the Business Division, and several faculty from the Business Division.

At the time the program was designed, there were no formal transfer agreements between the two schools. Although there was a Commonwealth Transfer Compact, this agreement did not guarantee admission to competitive programs. Graduates of the community colleges applied for admission to a school within the university. Admissions policies on the required grade point average were not consistent and varied from year-to-year depending on the number of applicants. The School of Management required community college graduates to earn the associate degree in five semesters, thereby ruling out any student who needed developmental-level

courses or who, for a variety of reasons, was less than full time for more than one term. As a minimum requirement, applicants also had to have earned a grade of C or higher in each of the six predictor courses, Accounting I and II, Economic I and II, Calculus and Linear Programming. Students who earned less than a C were not allowed to repeat the course.

The planning team determined that a viable effort to recruit and serve linguistic minority students would have to address four issues: recruitment and admissions, successful completion of the associate degree in Business Studies, transition to UMass and successful completion of the baccalaureate degree, and an environment at both institutions which is sensitive to and respectful of cultural differences. The group designed an integrated program of academic and personal support services to address the first three issues and planned a faculty development component to address the fourth issue. An application for FIPSE support was successful and the Bridges to Business program began in September 1989.

D. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The plan of operation identified five components. Three of those components were implemented during the grant period. One which addressed transfer and successful completion of the baccalaureate degree is still in process. Some aspects of the final component, dissemination, have been delayed since the amount of time students required to complete the program was underestimated.

1) A dual admissions/recruitment program to raise aspiration levels and eliminate barriers to transfer.

Although linguistic minorities make up a significant portion of the school population in the cities of Holyoke and Springfield, relatively few of these students applied to the School of Management. The planning team realized that we would have to design a program that included a seamless path from the community college to the School of Management. If we were to ask these students to aspire to a baccalaureate program, then we had to provide much more than a vague opportunity for transfer. Recruitment needed to be a joint effort so that prospective students could hear the same message from both institutions. We planned to recruit ten students from those already enrolled at Holyoke Community College in

year 1, and 12 new students in year 2 and year 3 through presentations at area high schools which served linguistic minority students.

The heart of the program was a dual admissions agreement which guaranteed admission to the School of Management for those students who met the requirements of the program. Students accepted for the Bridges to Business program at Holyoke Community college also received a conditional letter of acceptance from the School of Management. The two institutions would jointly design the admissions criteria for the Bridges to Business program and agree on the conditions of the dual acceptance.

FIPSE provided funds for the Director of Minority Student Affairs at the School of Management to devote half time to this project. While she was involved with all aspects of the program, recruitment was a major responsibility. FIPSE funds were also used for a half-time program coordinator at Holyoke Community College who would be involved in recruitment and admission, as well as providing workshops and seminars for currently enrolled students. We also planned that the Assistant Director of Admissions at HCC would contribute a portion of her time to the recruitment effort. The two institutions would produce a brochure describing the program and funds were provided for local travel.

2) A comprehensive academic program with integrated support services for linguistic minorities which will enable them to meet the conditions of the dual admissions program

This component included a special course schedule, bilingual teaching assistants in key introductory courses in Business, peer tutors, and a weekly seminar during the first semester. Students were assigned an advisor from the School of Management as well as Holyoke Community College in order to maintain contact with the university. Bridges to Business students would be included in activities sponsored by the School of Management and would have an opportunity to meet faculty and UMass students.

In planning this component we sought to integrate academic support services with introductory courses during the first semester in order to overcome language barriers. Students had a common course schedule and most of them were enrolled

in only three courses during the first semester. We theorized that bilingual teaching assistants could, if necessary, resort to the student's first language in order to explain concepts and vocabulary. After the first semester, we assumed students would be prepared for advanced courses and could complete their program of study. Peer tutors would be available to provide assistance as needed. The program coordinator would provide counseling and coordinate access to other academic support services at Holyoke Community College. As we began to recognize the degree to which math anxiety and poor math skills were impeding student progress, we redirected funds to support special course sections of accounting and math during the summer.

The planning team also agreed that it was important to introduce Bridges to Business students to the university in order to smooth the transition from the community college to UMass. Therefore, we planned field trips to the university and regular contact with a School of Management advisor. Although we initially planned to recruit SOM students as bilingual teaching assistants and HCC students as peer tutors, the few bilingual students at the SOM could not arrange their schedules to travel to HCC. Consequently, we recruited teaching assistants from the HCC part-time faculty and bilingual sophomore-level students in Business. However, we were able to hire a graduate student from the School of Management to hold open tutoring sessions every Friday. These graduate students proved to be a major asset since students were comfortable asking them questions about life at the university as well as for help with their studies.

FIPSE funds were requested for the bilingual teaching assistants, peer tutors, and special summer sessions. Holyoke Community College agreed to provided other academic support services.

3) Transfer to the University of Massachusetts-Amherst School of Management and successful completion of the baccalaureate degree

This component was intended to address what the planning team perceived as one of the primary barriers to transfer, lack of sufficient financial aid. Since many linguistic minority students spend several semesters enrolled in ESL courses and developmental-level courses before moving into the mainstream, we were concerned that they would exhaust their eligibility for financial aid. We also

recognized that low income families and students may be unwilling to resort to student loans to finance their education. For these families assuming responsibility for loans that exceed their annual income is frightening. Even accessing need-based assistance can be difficult as many linguistic minority students and their families cannot comprehend the forms and regulations. In order to overcome this barrier, the School of Management planned to raise private funds to support scholarships for Bridges to Business students and both institutions would work with students to identify sources of financial aid.

The planning team also recognized that despite our ongoing effort to introduce students to the university, it was likely that they would experience difficulty making the transition from the community college to the School of Management. Therefore, the School of Management would provide counseling, organize study and support groups, and arrange for peer tutors for these students.

Initially, FIPSE funds were requested for tutors and peer counselors for students who transferred to the university. The Director of the Minority Student Program would provide counseling and organize support groups. When it became apparent that relatively few students would transfer during the grant period, these funds were redirected to provide additional support services at HCC. The Director of Development at the School of Management was assigned the task of securing corporate support for scholarships.

4) <u>An environment which enhances opportunities for linguistic minority students</u>

One of the resources which influenced the planning team was the report on Equity and Pluralism published by the New England Board of Higher Education in 1989. The report pointed out that since most college administrators and faculty had grown up in environments that provided little exposure to cultural differences that they were likely to be unaware of the cultural mores and values which impact learning styles and behaviors. Clearly, we needed to create a hospitable environment for linguistic minority students if they were to be retained and achieve academic success. Furthermore, the discussions of the planning team had made us all well aware how uninformed each college was of about the policies, mission, culture and expectations of the other. Therefore, we planned a joint faculty development

program to enhance sensitivity to and appreciation of cultural differences. Using the issue of cultural diversity as a focal point, we also sought to expand interaction between the faculty at the two institutions in order to improve communications, foster relationships between departments and individuals, and create new opportunities for collaboration based on mutual regard for each institution's unique mission and an appreciation of shared goals.

FIPSE funds were used to provide release time for four faculty from each institution to serve on a steering committee to identify relevant issues and design a two-year program of joint activities. Funds were also provided for consultants and travel to conferences on topics related to diversity.

5) Dissemination

It was the intent of both institutions to create a model that other community college and university partners could replicate. The planning committee identified three strategies for dissemination: presentations at national conferences, articles in appropriate journals, and a final report for all AACBS members. FIPSE funds were provided for travel and the production of a report for AACBS members.

E. PROJECT RESULTS

Each component of the project provided opportunities for learning, Students learned that they could succeed in college, faculty and administrators involved with the program gained a better understanding of how to meet the needs of linguistic minority students, and Holyoke Community College became more sensitive to cultural differences. Each component produced mixed results. Some strategies succeeded, others failed. However, we learned from our failures and developed new approaches that were more successful.

Dual Admissions/Recruitment

At our first FIPSE conference in September 1989, one of the presenters likened a collaborative to a marriage. Within days of returning to Western Massachusetts, the partners in this collaborative were contemplating divorce. Negotiating the details of a dual admissions agreement were more difficult that we anticipated. The School of Management feared that they would be discriminating against other qualified

applicants if they granted special status to students enrolled in the Bridges to Business program. Some of the staff felt that Bridges to Business students should follow the normal transfer process and be expected to meet whatever standards prevailed in that year. Those representing Holyoke Community College felt strongly that a true dual admissions agreement was central to the program. Without such an agreement the program would lack credibility with the students we wished to serve. It took several weeks to get the School of Management to agree to the dual admissions component. The final agreement extended the time allowed to earn the associate's degree to the equivalent of six full-time semesters. Students were required to achieve a 2.5 QPA and a C average in the six predictor courses—English (2), Accounting (2) and Math (2).

Turnover in personnel hampered the recruitment effort in the first two years of the program. The position of Assistant Director of Admissions who was to devote half time to the project was eliminated due to the fiscal crisis. A new half-time position was created to recruit and provide counseling services for Bridges to Business students. Lucy Perez, the half-time outreach and counseling specialist, later assumed the responsibilities of Coordinator of ESL Support and was replaced by Edwin Sanchez. Both Lucy and Edwin were excellent ambassadors for the program and both developed positive relationships with students. At the end of the grant period, Edwin Sanchez was chosen to fill a full-time institutionally funded position in ESL support.

Initially, we had difficulty recruiting students for the program. Our plan in the first year was to recruit students already enrolled at Holyoke Community College. Although all linguistic minority students who were enrolled in Business or Arts and Science were contacted, most were reluctant to participate. Some had such poor skills in mathematics that it would have required more than a year of developmental math in order to prepare them for the required college-level math sequence. Others lacked the self-confidence to commit to the idea of a baccalaureate degree. After numerous meetings with HCC and SOM personnel, ten students elected to participate in the program in the spring of 1990. Recruitment became less of a problem in subsequent years and by the fall of 1992, 25 students were enrolled in the transition component. Most are interested in continuing in the Bridges to Business program. Several of the students in this fall's entering class are relatives or close friends of students who entered in 1990 or 1991. While there was some

joint recruiting early in the project, it proved to be difficult to coordinate schedules and so Holyoke Community College assumed the primary responsibilities for recruitment.

Although we anticipated serving traditional age students, many of the students we initially recruited were adults who had interrupted their education. Some were single parents who had to plan their studies around caring for their families. Most were low income and so experienced problems that deterred their progress. Unreliable child care, inadequate housing, family illness and other unforeseen circumstances forced students to leave the college for a semester or more. For many of these students transferring posed additional problems since they also had to relocate their families. However, in 1991 and 1992, a greater percentage of new entrants are traditional age college oriented students.

Although it is difficult to attribute major institutional change to any one initiative, there are two significant changes that are due at least in part to this project. In the spring of 1990, the University of Mass-Amherst announced a dual admissions program with five community colleges, including Holyoke Community College. The dual admissions agreement which includes all of schools at the university contains most of the elements of the agreement which was developed for this program: students receive a conditional acceptance at the time they are admitted to the community college, all associate degree graduates with a grade point average of 2.5 who completed an approved program of study are automatically admitted to the related degree program at the university, and students are assigned a UMass advisor while enrolled at the community college. This fall approximately 700 Holyoke Community College students are enrolled in the dual admissions program.

Equally important, the project has helped Holyoke Community College attract and serve minority students. This fall approximately 19% of these Hispanic students enrolled at the college identify themselves as minority. Hispanic students account for 11% of the student population. This fall 117 Hispanics are enrolled in the Business Division and 25 entering students are enrolled in the Transition to Business program which leads to Bridges to Business. The half-time bilingual counselor/outreach position which was supported by FIPSE is now a full-time position supported by institutional funds. The college has also added a bilingual financial aid/admissions specialist.

A Comprehensive Academic Program With Integrated Support Services

Essentially, the academic and support services program was implemented as planned with only one significant change. Math skills and math anxiety were a major stumbling block. Students were unprepared for the required college-level math courses and were convinced that they could not master math. Their math anxiety also carried over to accounting. It became increasingly obvious that we must find a strategy that would enable these students to succeed in a math-related course if we were to retain them in the program. Consequently, in the summer of 1990, we offered a special section of Accounting 111-112 for Bridges to Business students. Classes met four days a week for three hours and were followed by study groups. Although the pace was intensive, students were expected to meet course standards. The same exams were used to measure student learning as were used in the usual course format. Students succeeded. The average grade in the course was B. More important, they gained self-confidence and learned the value of working together. In the summer of 1991 we offered developmental math in the same intensive format with similar results. Accounting was offered in 1992 and we plan to continue to alternate these courses in order to help linguistic minority students overcome their difficulties with math.

The summer experience led to informal study groups which continued to work together during the academic year. One such group met in the old student lounge every morning at 8:30. Even though the students were no longer enrolled in the same courses each semester, they continued to meet to help one another. Several students eventually became the bilingual teaching assistants for the introductory courses in Business, Economics, Computer Applications and Business Math.

Field trips to the School of Management were an important component of the program. Students met with senior administrators and attended classes. New students also toured the campus. Most important, the School of Management made them feel welcome and comfortable. For the last two years, Bridges to Business students have been guests at the School of Management awards banquet. Each year, the dean has introduced them and talked about the importance of this program. Regular contact with the Director of the Minority Management Education Program and/or her assistant have helped the students feel a part of the university. However, the graduate students from the School of Management who served as

tutors were particularly important. Students found it easy to approach them with practical questions about life at UMass, courses, financial aid, housing, etc. as well as for help with their studies. This spring, one of the Bridges to Business graduates who transferred to the School of Management will return to Holyoke Community College as the Bridges to Business Tutor.

While it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of each component of the program, the true measure of success is student achievement. Although the students enrolled in this program certainly can be considered "high risk," they performed as well as all students enrolled at HCC. To date 43 students have been served by the transitional program which is the feeder for Bridges to Business. During their first and second semesters when the Bridges to Business program provided integrated support services and counseling, these high risk students were much more successful than other minority students in terms of retention and grade point average. When compared to all fall 1991 new entrants, they also exceeded the all-college GPA for the first and second semesters and exhibited higher rates of retention.

	ETHNIC MINORITIES[1]	BRIDGES TO BUSINESS STUDENTS[2]	NEW ENTRANTS FALL 1991
Number	216	43	1,204
Average GPA First Semester	1.84	2.36	2.13
No. Placed on Probation First Semester (PM, CM or RM)	41	1	167
% on Probation First Semester	19%	2.3%	14%
No. Return Second Semester	151	41	880
% Return Second Semester	70%	95%	73%
Average GPA Second Semester	1.82	2.28	2.11
No. Placed on Probation Second Semester	36	3	141
% on Probation Second Semester	24%	7.3%	15%

[1]Native American, Asian or Pacific Islander, Black or Hispanic
[2]Entered Bridges to Business program fall 1989 or fall 1990 or fall 1991

Seven students have graduated. The average GPA of Bridges to Business graduates was 2.96 as compared to 2.97 for all graduates. The average GPA for program

participants was 2.44 as compared to 2.47 for all students in the spring of 1992. To date, 14 students (29%) have left the college. Of that group 12 were in good academic standing, one was on academic probation and one was required to withdraw. Two of those who left have already registered for the January term.

One element of the program, the people factor, can't be measured, yet, it was critical to the success of both the program and individual students. The faculty coordinator, Anne Potter, was a true advocate for these students. She was determined that they succeed and so praised them when they earned it and chastised them when they needed it. When the system got in the way of student success, Anne worked on changing the system. She cared and the students knew it. She hand-picked the faculty for the summer math and accounting courses to be sure that they were excellent student-centered teachers who would put forth an extra effort to help these students succeed. She put in countless extra hours to work with individual students and celebrated their success with an end-of-the-semester party for students and their families. Lucy Perez and Edwin Sanchez, the outreach specialists/counselor, are both graduates of HCC who went on to earn baccalaureate degrees from Mt. Holyoke College and Westfield State College. Both were excellent role models who were able to draw upon their own experience as students. The SOM tutors, Sarah May and Linda Randell, took a personal interest in each of these students and became mentors as well as tutors. To a great degree, the success of this program or any other similar effort depends on the finding key staff who have the enthusiasm, determination and talent to make the program work.

The success of the Bridges to Business program has convinced the college of the need for transitional programs for linguistic minority students. A transitional program in Nursing for minority students, modeled on the first semester of the Bridges to Business program, was implemented this fall and the college is considering a similar transitional program for linguistic minority students in Arts and Science.

Transfer to UMass-Amherst and Completion of the Baccalaureate Degree

By June 1992, a total of seven students who were enrolled in the Bridges to Business program earned associate degrees. Three, Hector Diaz, Allegra Emmanuelli, and Yu Chen Wang are currently enrolled at the School of Management. Hector, who three

years ago was sure that he could never pass the introductory accounting course, earned an A- in Accounting 111 and is now majoring in accounting. Allegra and Yu Chen are majoring in management. Another graduate, Lillian Orozco, works in the financial aid office at Holyoke Community College and is enrolled in the evening program at UMass. Ana Rivera has moved to Puerto Rico. Newry Rivera has moved to New York and hopes to enter Hunter College when she meets the residency requirement. Soniah Roque is moving to Panama where her husband is teaching. Two students, Becky Davis and Dagoberto Cordova, will graduate this semester and both plan to enroll in the School of Management in January. Two, Lay Seng and Oscar Ramos, expect to graduate in June 1993 and enroll at UMass in the fall.

Those that have continued their education at the university are well prepared academically. Their grade point averages range from 2.95 to 3.73. In fact all graduates of the program achieved grade point averages above the required minimum for transfer. The GPA of program graduates range from 2.58 to 3.73 with three of the graduates earning GPAs over 3.0. Although the semester is not yet over, all three of the students enrolled in the School of Management report that they are doing well.

The School of Management have been successful in their efforts to attract private support for scholarships for these students. Both Allegra and Hector received scholarships from the School of Management to supplement their financial aid packages. Hector was also one of two community college transfer students to receive a special scholarship from the university. Yu Chen Wang received some scholarship aid from HCC.

Since students needed six or more semesters to earn the associates degree, this component of the program really cannot be evaluated at this time. However, we plan to track these students as well as future graduates in order to determine how they fared at the university.

AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ENHANCES OPPORTUNITIES

Although initially we planned to focus the faculty development component on the Business faculty, we soon realized that we needed to include all faculty in this

project if we were to have an institutional climate that was sensitive to linguistic minority students.

Over the three years, we organized a series of programs and workshops to help faculty develop a better understanding of cultural differences and to begin to create a more hospitable climate for minority students. Our first event, a dinner with a guest speaker from Digital Equipment Company who talked about valuing differences, brought together faculty, administrators, and advisory board members from both colleges. For many faculty it was the first time that they had met their counterparts at the other institution. While this was a productive event, we did not hold joint events in subsequent years. Because the minority student population at Holyoke Community College was growing, the college was much more eager to work on this issue than the School of Management which had yet to experience an increase in the enrollment of linguistic minority students. Administrators, faculty and staff at the community college were receptive to new ideas and eager to discuss what could and should be done to improve access and retention of these students.

In year 2, on the advice of the steering committee, Holyoke offered a day-long workshop on diversity conducted by the Equity Institute. More than 80 HCC faculty and administrators attended. The workshop in January 1991 and the subsequent report from the Equity Institute sparked discussion and action at Holyoke Community College. Other funds were used for a workshop on Campus Climate in early February and to support exemplary projects related to diversity in the 1991-92 academic year. In October 1991, the President compiled and distributed a progress report on each of the recommendations in the report from the Equity Institute. In January 1992, the Long-Range Planning Committee identified diversity as one of the five critical issues that the college would face in the next five years and included preliminary planning sessions on this issue at the professional day devoted to long-range planning. That spring, the Board of Trustees of Holyoke Community College held their first day-long retreat to discuss diversity and to develop a plan to create a more diverse campus community. Another workshop in May 1992 featuring a team of faculty and administrators associated with the bilingual education program Kean College in New Jersey was attended by 40 faculty from a variety of disciplines. As a result of the ideas presented in the workshop, Holyoke Community College now offers math, sociology, psychology and typing in Spanish so that Hispanic students can begin to work on degree requirements while enrolled in ESL courses. In

November 1992, the President distributed a report on diversity initiatives developed since January 1992 to the Board of Trustees. Some of the highlights of the report are:

- a Minority Student Fellowship program to provide internships for graduate students interested in careers in community colleges
- the revision of existing courses to include multicultural readings and a new course in World Civilization
- an increase in the number of biligual/bicultural staff in student services area
- new positions specifically for bilingual students in the financial aid office and the bookstore in order to improve services to students.

Although the college has made significant progress, there is more to do. In November 1992, the Long-Range Planning Committee draft report identified diversity as one of seven institutional goals. By June 1993, the committee will complete a detailed institutional plan for this goal.

Dissemination

While the project is being modeled within Holyoke Community College and the dual admissions concept has been expanded to all programs in five community colleges, we have probably spent less time on dissemination than any of the other components. Results were slow in coming and until this fall we had not had any students transfer. It will probably take another year before we can report on the outcomes of the program. We have produced a video on the program which we will use in presentations in the future. A copy of the video is included in the final report.

Plans For the Future

Holyoke Community College has continued this program. The Outreach Specialist is now a full-time position supported by institutional funds. Bilingual teaching assistants for special sections of introductory courses and the peer tutor from the School of Management are funded by a vocational education grant as is release time for the faculty coordinator. The School of Management continues to organize field

trips and to provide personnel for workshops on the Holyoke Community College campus. The concept of dual admissions has been extended to all students enrolled in transfer-oriented curricula. Because this program has been successful, the college implemented a similar program to help minority students gain access to our highly selective nursing program. A transitional program in Arts and Science is under consideration.

Summary and Conclusions

Collaboratives are difficult even when the two parties have a common goal. The differences in climate, culture, mission and values between a large university and a community college at times complicate communication. Maintaining a positive working relationship takes time and energy. Since each party is seeking to implement the project in a different environment, opportunities for conflict between the partners are ever present.

Looking backward, it seems that much of the confusion stemmed from the fact that each institution was committed to addressing a different problem. The School of Management viewed this project as a means of recruiting minority students. They were less interested in resolving issues related to climate or student success since they had no reason to believe that these students would be any different than the traditional students they currently served. Conversely, Holyoke Community College viewed the project as a way to improve student retention and achievement. The linguistic minority population at the college was growing and despite other efforts, these students exhibited higher rates of attrition and below average levels of achievement. While recruitment and transfer were a component of the project, the HCC staff felt strongly that retention and student achievement were the most critical issues. Our prior experience had convinced us that serving a multicultural student population would require real changes in policies, teaching strategies and support services.

One other factor also seems to be significant. At Holyoke Community College, a senior faculty member was responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the project. She worked directly with these students and became their advocate. When it became apparent that institutional policies impeded the program, she was in a position to lobby for change and resources. At the School of Management, the Director of the Minority Management Education Program was responsible for the

program. She was new to the university and lacked faculty status. Her ability to influence the faculty in the School of Management was limited.

Although both partners were committed to the project, it was a major initiative at the community college since the issues of student success and institutional climate were of concern to the entire institution. While the model we proposed did improve retention, graduation and transfer opportunities for linguistic minority students, the project also brought about other changes at Holyoke Community College. Although we initially sought to address issues of climate by working with faculty in the Business Division, we quickly realized that climate is an institutional issue. The professional development activities funded by FIPSE increased awareness, sparked discussion and led to creative problem solving. Since the fiscal crisis limited our ability to implement costly new initiatives, we focused on redirecting current resources to enhance our ability to serve limited English proficiency students. For example, some work-study positions in the financial aid office and the bookstore are reserved for biligual students in order to provide better service to limited English proficiency students. We recognized the need to institutionalize the outreach and support programs and reallocated funds for additional staff. More important we realized that our initial premise was accurate. These students do need some special assistance at the beginning of their program if they are going to have a realistic opportunity for success. Given that assistance and an advocate, they can achieve at a high level. Students confirm that these were the factors that made the difference on the enclosed videotape. The Bridge to Business program is being replicated in Nursing and we are considering ways to implement it in Arts and Science.

Although we have made significant progress towards creating a more hospitable climate for minority students, there is much more to be done. The more we learn, the more we become aware of the complexity of the problem. However FIPSE support provided the impetus for the college to begin the dialog and strengthen the commitment to change. The college's long-range plan will identify the steps the institution will take to achieve our goals. The steady increase in the number of minority students enrolled at the college as well as real improvements in retention, tell us that we are on the right path.

Assistance from FIPSE: Our program officer, Sharin Marshell, really wanted our project to succeed. She often recognized our problems before we did and posed solutions. Her site visits were productive and provided us with an opportunity to reflect on our success and failures. On several occasions, she was able to bring the two colleges together to honestly discuss some of the issues that were complicating communication.

FIPSE conferences proved to be a bonus. Each year we came home with a new idea or a new source of expertise. As a result of one workshop we attended, we are implementing a professional development program to improve the teaching skills of our part-time faculty. Some of the ideas discussed at the FIPSE conferences helped us develop a new perspective or way of thinking about a particular issue.

Considerations in Reviewing Future Proposals: In reviewing proposals which include a collaborative, FIPSE ought to consider at institutional readiness for change. All of the partners in the collaborative should have similar pressing reasons to move in a new direction. The collaborative effort should be focused on solving the same problem in different settings, not different problems. Resolving the conflicts and problems that will occur also requires that the lead people at each participating institution have the authority to influence policies and procedures.

Perhaps future projects which are focused on improving opportunities for linguistic minority students need to address instructional methods as well as support services. We found that intensive summer courses which allowed these students to focus all of their time and energy on one subject were extremely successful in terms of student achievement. Another area that could be addressed is family involvement. While educators realize that first generation college students are at risk, linguistic minority students are much more likely to come from low income families where neither parent has graduated from high school. It is not unusual to find that the parents of these students have had very little formal education. Consequently, they simply do not understand the college experience. Poverty and lack of family support seem to be more significant barriers to enrollment and retention than language.